

## **Remarks by Rear Admiral R.C. North**

Good morning and thank you for coming to this landmark event between our two agencies. I appreciate your participation and commitment. I applaud the efforts of all those who were involved in the project and thank the MMS Project Team members, the Coast Guard Project Team comprised of HQ, Eighth District and field unit personnel and especially industry representatives.

I would like to recognize Mr. Witten, Mr. Meyer, and Mr. Brooks, and other members of the American Petroleum Institute and Offshore Operators Committee, who were invaluable to the success of this effort. The spirit of cooperation displayed by all was especially noteworthy.

In keeping with the Vice President's National Partnership for Reinventing Government and the Government Performance and Results Act, it is vital that our agencies eliminate redundancy and inefficiency, and that we streamline our activities while enhancing safety and environmental protection objectives. This MOU goes a long way towards achieving that goal in the area of Offshore operations:

- It incorporates an easy to read matrix, which clearly delineates each agency's responsibilities providing industry with a quick reference to identify the proper agency to engage when faced with problems or questions regarding compliance with regulatory requirements.
- It removes duplicative requirements that come under the jurisdiction of both agencies.
- It clarifies lead agency responsibilities for offshore pollution incidents shared by the Coast Guard Federal On-Scene Coordinator and the MMS Response Supervisor; and
- It clarifies civil penalty action, casualty investigation and reporting responsibilities for each agency.

The signing of this document, however, is only the beginning. The real work is ahead of us when this MOU will be tested everyday in the field. We must continue to show the same respect for each other and work in the same spirit of cooperation and strive to seek even more innovative and effective methods to further improve the process.

Thank you once again for coming and congratulations on a job well done.